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K. Payne (T.) Political Writings
Mr Ormerod.

LETTERS

TO

THOMAS PAYNE,

IN ANSWER TO HIS LATE PUBLICATION

ON THE

RIGHTS OF MAN.

BY

A MEMBER

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

By the Rev. Mr. Jepson

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P R E F A C E.

AS the Letters of Thomas Payne have had a great run, and, it must be said, have made much impression upon many; I have ventured to send to the press a few sentiments of mine upon a subject now much agitated, and, doubtless, of no small importance to the Public at large, as well as to individuals in particular.

Should what I have here advanced meet with the approbation of my Readers, I shall think my time and care well compensated in my endeavour to discharge the duty of what I deem a good, that is, a peaceable or conciliating member of the Great Community to which I belong.

THE AUTHOR.

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L E T T E R I.

S I R,

IN the Preface to the Rights of Man, you take notice, that you promised your Parisian friends to answer Mr. Burke's Pamphlet, whensoever it should come forth. Now what can any one think of a man, who should make so rash a promise? How could you possibly foresee what this Pamphlet might contain? Or how could you be assured of your ability to enter the lists against a man of such uncommon learning and inge-

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nuity? I confess, that, after the publication of it, you might, with less danger of being censured for your vanity and presumption, have undertaken this task; the work being, in some respects, faulty and exceptionable. Presumption, however, is commonly thought to be justified by success; and you had no little reason to congratulate yourself, when you found your adversary had given you so favourable an opportunity of displaying your talents at his expence. But the reason which you assign for making this promise is still more extraordinary;—that the language, in which the author wrote, being little studied, and still less understood, in France, you thought it necessary to answser it. Now, as the author wrote in English, (a detested word, which you avoid by a long circumlocution,) it was impossible that you should

should be able to make it intelligible to your Parisian friends by answering it in English. And, therefore, though I doubt not that the work *would have suffered*, as you express it, by *your* translation, yet you will excuse me for thinking, that there was no choice left you, and that your imperfect translation into the French language would have been more intelligible at Paris, than your Remarks in a language little studied, and still less understood.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER II.

SIR,

MR. Burke is of opinion, that the settlement by the Convention in 1688 is binding on their posterity; you, on the contrary, maintain, that our ancestors could have no right to preclude their descendants from the same liberty which they claimed to themselves. If this be considered as a mere logical discussion, and a trial of skill between sophisters, you certainly have proved your point; but, if you suppose that your having done so can ever be of the smallest use to mankind, or is

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capable of being applicable to practice, you are extremely mistaken. For, granting you all you contend for, what advantage can you possibly derive from it? The Convention in 1688 insisted on certain terms, as the pledge of their allegiance; which terms were so many, so beneficial, and so comprehensive, that nothing seemed to be omitted that might conduce to their own, and the happiness of their successors; and, so long as these should be respected, they engaged, for themselves and their descendants, to be loyal and obedient to the present and future monarchs. And where was the absurdity of this proceeding? What ground of complaint is there against them for this conduct and this declaration? Does not our acquiescence in what they have done for *us*, as well as for *themselves*, and our approbation of it, which

which the revolution of a century has not diminished, prove that they acted wisely and virtuously? The truth is, that you have laid hold of the words *right*, *bind*, &c. and, by no injudicious abuse of them, have shewn, that Mr. Burke did not sufficiently provide against the attacks of captious, sophistical reasoners, who are more desirous of conquering an adversary, than of finding out truth; or, if it be a truth, I desire you to make what use of it you can for the benefit of your foreign friends.— That you can make no use of it at all, I think it not hard to convince you, by referring you to the country which you so much, and so *properly* prefer to your own, and taking a short view of the late Revolution. By the right of men to form a constitution for themselves, the French elected a certain number of deputies,

instructed them how they should proceed, and enjoined them to regulate their conduct by those instructions. Now, it must be owned, that, if ever the rights of men were capable of being made useful to men, they must have been so in this instance. The nation was all united in one interest ; elected its representatives fairly and openly, without any foreign interference, without any artifice, violence, or corruption ; in short, a fuller and more complete representation of a great and powerful nation can hardly be conceived by the human mind. What then is the effect of this right, and its application to the *regeneration*, I think you call it, of the State ? Without doubt, the will of the people was accurately fulfilled, the abuses complained of rectified, provisions made against the renewal of them, and, the business

being

being compleated, the representatives have justified the exactness of their obedience to their constituents ! No such thing ; they formed designs of their own, diametrically opposite to those of their constituents ; and took to pieces the Constitution, which they were commanded only to improve and reform. For doing this, I do not mean to censure or reproach them ; but only to shew what, I think, it does most evidently ; that *this* right, at least, of men is a dead letter, and that, as slaves are governed by monarchs, so are free men by those they depute.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R III.

S I R,

AS I am very sure that, in your censure of Mr. Burke, you frequently wrote what you did not understand yourself, you will not wonder, that neither do your readers understand you. Sometimes, however, it must be allowed, that your meaning is plain enough, and, where it is so, it is curious to examine how far it is just. This country, you say, since the Conquest, has never regenerated itself, and, therefore, is without a constitution. Give me leave, Sir, to affirm, that the phrase,

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regenerate itself, is absurd and ridiculous: nothing can generate, much less regenerate itself, that is, generate itself twice; for, if it does not mean this, it means nothing. If, by an improper usage of the word, you mean renewing its ancient constitution, how is this more applicable to France than to England? It is, indeed, much less so; for, at the Restoration, the ancient constitution (though you are pleased to deny that we have any constitution) was renewed with improvements; at the Revolution, with still greater improvements.

But what is a political constitution? Mr. Locke somewhere observes, that we abuse words by not annexing to them the ideas which they were particularly intended to convey. This is the common error of

of those who have united moderate abilities with great assurance and little learning. Every government, consisting of parts properly put together, has a political constitution. The English have such a constitution; little understood by you, as being framed and compacted with a strength and delicacy, which they only know how to admire who have surveyed the several parts of it in detail, with their correspondence and fitness to each other. I am far from thinking it free from defects; and lament, that nothing mortal is so. But it is better calculated to promote happiness than any other form of government, either in ancient or modern times, that of France excepted, which is not yet sufficiently settled and established to enable us to form any judgement concerning it.

I am, Sir, &c.

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L E T.

LETTER IV.

SIR,

IF it be necessary to the idea of a constitution, that it be framed by the people, I do assert, that there never was, nor ever will be, a constitution in any nation so long as the world shall endure. Whatever may be the merit of that which you so much extol as perfect and complete in all its parts, you will not easily induce us to adopt the same measures as your friends on the other side of the water, till we are oppressed by similar grievances, and urged by the same necessity. When you exhort

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us to vindicate our liberty, we answer, that we did vindicate it a century ago, and have preserved it since that time inviolate and uncorrupt. Should you tell me, in particular, that I am a slave, I should expect, that you would next tell me I had the gout or the stone, when I am sure that I have neither. Great as the King's influence is, and as, we think, it necessary that it should be, yet no subject would submit to be injured by him, but would apply for redress to his own Courts of Justice, without the least doubt of obtaining it: the wealth and titles of the Peerage are no security amongst us, according to the nature of the offence, from the law, or private resentment. The names of Dukes, Earls, and Barons, which are so disgusting to your ear, give me no more offence than those of a Justice of the Peace, or a Constable.

stable. In a country circumstanced like America, titles may be useless, or, perhaps, pernicious ; but, in great and populous nations, such as the foreigners your friends, and your countrymen your enemies, such distinctions are not only harmless but useful.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R V.

SIR,

THE several Charters, by which our towns have been incorporated, were by no means granted, originally as monopolies, but for the due government of such places, and as the most effectual means of protection against the Barons in the neighbourhood. It is certain, that they are no longer necessary for this purpose; and no less so, that they are attended with some inconveniences. But, when you say that a man, coming from another part of the coun-

country, is hunted from them as a foreign enemy, you betray a disregard to truth, convince us that it is your greatest pleasure to abuse your country, and that your heart is as black as your abilities are contemptible. The truth is, that, in some of these chartered towns, a stranger cannot exercise his trade or occupation, without (as it is called) taking up his freedom: the expence of which differs in different places, and is sometimes oppressive to young beginners. But, by this conduct, the corporate bodies do more hurt to themselves, than to any one else. There are places enough, free from such fines and vexations, where the ingenious and industrious may settle themselves and families; and, accordingly, trade and manufactories flourish principally where, instead of a Mayor and Aldermen, there is only a Constable or

Headborough. But how could you forget to stigmatize your countrymen still more ignominiously, by adding, that, in every village in the kingdom, a man from another country is hunted like a foreign enemy? You well know, there is nothing more common than to prevent families from settling in new habitations, and obliging them to return to their former abodes.— To this you will answer, “ We order “ these things better in France.” So you do something else; having none, or a very small tax for the maintenance of the poor; whereas, what we call the poor-rates oblige the inhabitants of this country to be circumspect, whom they suffer to reside amongst them; lest the burthen of supporting the indigent, which is already very great, should become intolerable. From the most humane of all institutions arise some incon-

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veniences; and it is therefore easier for your friends (who neither provide for their needy brethren, and have impoverished the Clergy, who did,) to permit their poor countrymen *to starve*, where they please, than it is for us to permit our needy brethren *to live* where they please.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R VI.

S I R,

AS I confess, with shame, that I am too indolent to take half the pains to justify and vindicate my countrymen, that you have done to vilify and abuse them ; I cannot persuade myself to pursue your reasonings, step by step, but shall content myself with a few remarks on such parts of your Pamphlet as either are, or appear to me to be, best worth considering. It cannot be denied, that our representation in Parliament is very defective, and has long been the subject of frequent and just com-

plaints. I could even furnish you with some instances of venality and corruption, which would afford still more ample matter of triumph to you, and the rest of the Anglo-Gallicans ; such and so enormous, as even *you* would not be able to exaggerate. Why then do we not amend and reform these abuses, especially having before us the example of our *wise and virtuous neighbours* ? Perhaps, we may be able to account, in some measure, for this difference in our conduct. The reason is this ; that, not being slaves just enfranchised, but having long been accustomed to the contemplation and enjoyment of Liberty, we survey it with pleasure, indeed, but without any violent emotion ; and are not easily induced to rid ourselves of inconveniences, of which we know the worst, to run the hazard of others,

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the consequences of which we cannot foresee. We have no occasion to recur to the first principles of government; because, from so doing, we could derive no advantage, which we do not already enjoy. We foresee great difficulties, and great dangers, in new-modelling the constitution; but we do not foresee any addition of prosperity or happiness to arise from it. It is the temper of your friends to act with haste and impetuosity; but of us, as of our ancestors, to preserve what we have gotten, and to add to it slowly and cautiously. Accordingly, personal freedom, and the security of property, have been fortified with additional bulwarks, from the Revolution to this hour, notwithstanding the corruptness both of the electors, and of the elected. Speculative men may discover many faults in our constitution and government;

but the most delicate and irritable feel no material grievance. The most oppressive grievance, under which we labour, arises from the taxes, and these from the necessity of being on our guard against our ambitious neighbours. Yet these taxes being levied impartially, and collected at the smallest expence that can be devised, we support them with patience, and even with chearfulness; and are determined still to bear, and even to add to them, rather than defraud our creditors, or pay them at the expence of others.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T-

LETTER VII.

SIR,

OUR present constitution did not grow (as you call it) out of the Conquest; for, had this been the case, it would have grown from bad to worse: but our ancestors, having sense enough to seize the opportunities which presented themselves, checked and gradually put an entire stop to the growth of arbitrary power; planting in its room certain suckers, which still survived, of the old Saxon stock, as is evident in our Parliament, and Courts of Judicature. But as the mode of electing our representatives is,

is, not without reason, censured, as partial and unequal, I can no otherwise justify our ancestors than by supposing they had found no inconveniences in it; nor, even at the Revolution, did its defects appear so striking, as to induce the Legislators to alter it. Since that time, its faults have been more apparent, and, if it could be done safely, it is to be wished it were otherwise regulated. The Assembly in France had the advantage of being (from the circumstances of the time) invested with full and absolute power; could settle the number to be elected, the manner of electing, and had many other advantages which were wanting to our ancestors. But one of the first steps taken by this very Assembly was, *without any regard to your judgement*, to establish fundamental laws, by which their successors were to be bound, and to ap-

appoint an intermediate body between the Assembly and the People; by whom, and not by the people themselves, the future representatives were to be elected. By this method, the Members of the Assembly will be appointed by less than a thirtieth part of those whom they are supposed to represent; and as the Deputies of the present meeting neglected the instructions of those who actually appointed them, it is likely that their successors will not pay much attention to those, who are not to appoint them.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER VIII.

SIR,

YOU inform us, that Conquest and Tyranny transplanted themselves with William the Conqueror from Normandy into England, and that the country is still disfigured with the marks. If they did transplant themselves, I suppose they were first planted; and therefore the Norman French were enslaved earlier than the English. The truth is, all countries are or have been enslaved, and but

but few have ever shaken off their chains. We loosened them by degrees, and, a century ago, threw them entirely away. The French have done the same more hastily, and in a manner more suitable to the warmth of their temper, within these three years. But, though we thank you for kindly informing us that we have been conquered, we deny that we are still disfigured by the marks of it. The strangers who visit this country never discover these scars ; the excess of Liberty they have sometimes censured ; never the want of it. The cities bear no such marks of conquest or tyranny ; they are full of citizens, pursuing, uncontrouled, their business or amusements. The country is not desolate or uncultivated, nor its inhabitants poor and beggarly ; ill-clad, or ill-fed, as they

are you know where. Perhaps the forests, and the laws relating to them, may, in some measure, be inconvenient; but they are neither very extensive, nor has the delay of deforesting them arisen from the throne. The rights of the neighbourhood have hitherto prevented what is undoubtedly desirable; rights which we respect, whatever you may do. It is probable, however, that these marks (as you call them) will shortly disappear, as the Parliament has, for some time, had the state of the forests before them; and I doubt not, that, in taking from the King his hunting grounds, and from the people their commons, they will secure an equivalent to both. The manorial rights are another grievance, which, being considered as private property, may, by purchase, be redeemed, and
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the lands enfranchised ; and they who do not redeem them, are doubtless, sensible that the inconvenience of them is not very great. The King being considered as paramount of all lands, is of no detriment to the possessors ; and, as the Law runs in his name, the Parliament have thought it not worth their while to alter the style of the Law proceedings, on account of the trouble and confusion it might occasion. There is one mark of the Conquest which I hope will always continue ; the answer *Soit il fait, comme il est désiré.* This is a wholesome remembrancer to us, that we *have* been conquered ; and that, having once emancipated ourselves, it becomes us to secure, with caution and firmness, what we have earned with difficulty and danger ; lest, to recover our losses,

we should be obliged to wade through as deep an ocean of murder, violence, and injustice, as we have lately observed with horror in a neighbouring kingdom.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T-

LETTER IX.

SIR,

WARS, you say, in despotic governments, are the effect of pride; but, in those governments in which they become the means of taxation, of a more permanent principle. You have, in many parts of your last Pamphlet, exaggerated what was in a certain degree true, and, in others, assert most absurd and malignant falsehoods; but this is utter and absolute nonsense, notwithstanding the dogmatical manner in which it is expressed, and the authoritative air which you are pleased to assume.

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Do then all wars in despotic States proceed from pride ? None from ambition ? Or is ambition the same as pride ? And are the terms synonymous ? Do they never arise from the intrigues of Ministers, or of Mistresses ? And are they not as well the means of taxation in arbitrary as in limited governments ? Can they be supported by any government without taxes ? If they can, you will do well to impart the mighty secret to your Gallic friends ; and will, probably, have the satisfaction of seeing your country again conquered, and the marks of tyranny more conspicuous than ever. What are those States, in which the means of taxation are a more permanent principle of wars than in others ? It is evident that you mean to apply your paradox only to Britain ; and you could not have applied it more unfortunately. The views of

of the Minister in this country are, I suppose, generally directed to two points; the welfare of his country, and the preservation of his office. But, in commercial nations, both of these are best promoted by the continuance of peace, and the encouragement of the arts of peace. Injuries or insults frequently *compel* the Minister to give way to the public resentment, though he knows that war must shake him in his seat, and, if unsuccessful, occasion his dismission. Even Lord North could not maintain his post in an unpopular war, though supported by his Sovereign, and, for his private virtues, respected by the people. You, however, of all men have the least reason to censure that culpable and unfortunate Minister, whose conduct furnished *you* with an opportunity of inflaming too successfully the minds of the Americans

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against their European fellow-citizens, at that solemn crisis when there seemed to be, on both sides, an earnest desire to accommodate their differences, and to prevent that final rupture which, if not very pernicious, was, at least, very dishonourable to them both.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R X.

S I R,

MR. Burke, it seems, has denied that the Parliament or the Nation had any right to alter the succession to the Crown in any thing but in part, or by a sort of modification. I do not believe that the Parliament, in which were much abler men than either Mr. Burke or Thomas Payne, were of this opinion; though they acted as if they were—and wisely too. The right they actually exerted; and that as fully, in

altering the succession from one branch of the family to another, as if they had elected an utter stranger. But they chose to go as little out of the way as possible; partly, to indulge the prejudices of the people, who had generally a notion of hereditary right; partly, not to disgust all the branches of that family, which was connected with many and powerful Monarchs; but, especially, not to expose the kingdom to the worst of all constitutions, that of an Elective Monarchy. Whether they ought to have deprived the Crown of the power of making war, is not easy either to affirm or deny; no instance of the State's assuming it having yet occurred, except in the late Revolution in France: and as no event has yet shewn us what are the good or bad effects of this measure, I shall not presume either to censure or applaud it. This I leave

leave to you, who measure the wisdom of the people by the privileges of which they strip their *Prince*; a term which I use out of delicacy to you, knowing how averse you are to the name of King, though it were only King Log, or King Lewis.

I am, Sir, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R X L.

S I R,

“ **T**ITLES are but nick-names ; and every nick-name is a title.” If I was disposed to be serious about so ridiculous a proposition, I should say, that a title, as applied to any particular order of men, signifies some sort of superiority over those who want it ; and that a nick-name is usually conferred by way of ridicule or irony on those who have no right to it ; as a destructive tyrant was nick-named Euergetes, and another, who

who murdered his father, *Philopater*. But the names of Duke, Count, Marquis, &c. are not to be found in the vocabulary of Adam. A pleasant remark truly ! Will you be so kind as to acquaint us with *any* word that you *have* found in his vocabulary ? But the word, if taken in its first sence, does signify something real, and has a determinate idea annexed to it : that of a conductor, or general. By the Barbarians it was afterwards used to signify the elective or hereditary governor of a province, called a Duke-dom. A Count was, at first, one of the *cohors*, or retinue of a Roman commander ; afterwards, the governor of a province, as *Comes Saxonici Littoris* ; and a Marquis the governor of the frontiers or marches. In later times the Kings, of France particularly, conferred the name of Duke-dom

doms on private estates, and the title of Dukes on their owners; other lands they created into counties and marquisates, all marks of honour, and, when joined with a Peerage, parts of the constitution. As to the rabble of *soi-disant* Counts, &c. take them amongst you. In Britain all such titles imply the office of a Judge in the Supreme Court of Judciature, as well as a Member in one of the Estates of Parliament. These titles are not unfrequently conferred on military or legislative merit; *quibusdam fortuna pro virtutibus fuit*. In France, indeed, where they have been amusing themselves with the Farce of Duke and no Duke, such titles would now be nick-names, because abolished both by the King and the people: and it may be questioned whether the name of King be a title, or a nick-name;

rather, it seems, the latter, being *Vox et præterea nihil*; and he who is insulted with this mockery being the only slave in the Commonwealth.

I am, Sir, &c.

G L E T-

LETTER XII.

SIR,

YOU talk about nature and natural rights, as if we were in a state of nature; nor is it very extraordinary that, from a country where all are nearly on a level, you should transplant your leveling principles into others, to which they are in no wise adapted. The law of primogeniture is certainly unnecessary in the Province of the Massachusets, where the inhabitants are comparatively few, the country large, and estates of little value. And such an equal distribution of property is well calculated to

to disperse the several branches of the several families, and to promote population. And yet, if I am rightly informed, even there a larger portion descends to the eldest son than to the rest. When the country shall be better peopled, with new exigencies new regulations will take place; and the present mode of conveying inheritances give way to some other, better suited to a nation become rich and commercial, such as France and Britain are at present. Do you, who wish well to France, which is at this time metamorphosing herself from a military monarchy to a commercial Republic, advise her to compel the mechanic, who has contrived and erected some ingenious machine, on the working of which thousands of manufacturers depend, to split his property into equal parts among equal

relations ? or the merchant, who engages in an expensive intercourse with foreigners, and which he or his successors cannot support without an extensive capital ? If you do, you advise them very ill ; nor will they ever be able to carry on their trade in competition either with us or Holland, under such absurd regulations and restrictions. What is all this trash, about one child only being regarded, and the rest exposed ? The care of parents, by the rights of primogeniture, becomes ten-fold increased towards their younger children. Both their education and provision are more carefully attended to ; and they are taught to expect from their own industry, integrity, fortitude, and ingenuity, wealth and honour and importance in their several stations. Instead

stead of the heir being the only one who engages the attention of his parents, he is the only one who wants or receives this benefit in an inferior degree. He only is to be pitied, not the younger family. They commonly arrive, by honourable and worthy means, at the end of their pursuits, and enjoy with credit what they have obtained by perseverance. But the heir is taught to neglect his younger brothers and sisters ! On the contrary, it is of more use to them to have one of superior wealth and interest at their head, than if the estate had been divided and frittered amongst them all. But, if the rights of primogeniture be a grievance, how much greater is it that a man must not be permitted to dispose of his property as he shall think reasonable ! but must be di-

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rected in the disposition of his effects by Thomas Payne, who has kindly made a voyage from the Wilds of America, to instruct the wisest and most polished nations in Europe!

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XIII.

SIR,

“ **T**HOUGH Mr. Burke professes himself an enemy to war, yet he abuses the French constitution, which seeks to explode it.” To make *common sense* of these words, you should have made it appear that he abused the French constitution, *because* it sought to explode war. The truth is, he did not speak ill of it for any such reason; but it suited your purpose to convey falsehood, as usual, in the words of truth. But without any farther censure of your conduct, as always disingenuous,

ingenuous, and frequently unnatural, I shall take my leave of you with a few thoughts on this proposition ;— that the French constitution seeks to explode war. That the Assembly has laid it down as a maxim to make no conquests, is undoubted; and that they laughed at it at the moment they laid it down, I take also for granted. For though I am far from having so much veneration for them as you seem to have, yet I believe they are sensible that they cannot, either by their votes or edicts, alter the nature of man, which is ever restless, discontented, and looking for more than it at present possesses. If such is the disposition of men in general, even you, I think, with all your prejudices, will neither from the annals of France, nor from your observations on the present generation, suppose it to be exempted from the common

common infirmity. That the French do not wish, in the infancy of their Republic, weak and unsettled as it is, to engage themselves in troubles which may put into the hands of the King an authority dangerous to their Liberty, is extremely probable; and the declaration against going to war, is like a tub thrown to the whale, to amuse him, until the ship shall be out of danger. But, instead of never undertaking any future offensive war, I will venture not only to affirm that they certainly will; but also to conjecture on what principles they will proceed, and who will be the object of their first enterprizes: and this I shall do, neither from any opinion of my own foresight, nor from any desire of exciting suspicions towards our neighbours; but because I verily believe it necessary for my countrymen to have a watchful eye

on what is passing in France; more and greater dangers being to be apprehended from them while they use these peaceable expressions, than when they stormed and threatened under their most potent and politic Monarchs.

The principle on which they will act will probably be this; that they are to look on themselves, for the future, as a commercial nation; and that there is but one bar in their way to the monopolizing almost the commerce of the world. This will induce them to conduct themselves towards us as we conducted ourselves heretofore towards the Dutch. As they are safe on most of their frontiers by natural, and on the rest by artificial defences, they will not irritate or attack their continental neighbours, but rather purchase their neu-

neutrality by annual subsidies, by which, especially in Germany, which alone can be formidable to them, they may purchase any thing. Should a favourable juncture arise, they will deprive the Stadtholder of his power in Holland. And, though it is not the interest of that Republic that we should be destroyed, yet it will be in the power of France to oblige her to act contrary to her interest. Should such a juncture be wanting, she will commit every thing to the decision of the sword; for which, I fear, she will be too well prepared. I am not ignorant that we are a great and powerful nation; but France is still greater and more powerful; and the object of the war will be the most important to her that can possibly be conceived. Doubtless, we shall not be deficient either in the means, or in

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the courage, to annoy our enemies ;
but greater supplies of money, troops,
and ships, may produce their usual
effect, and the weaker party is
more likely to be pitied than to be
preserved.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XIV.

SIR,

Ut pereat possum rubigine ferrum
(which, undoubtedly, some of
your Parisian friends can construe to
you) is a wish that has been cherished
many thousand years, but has never
yet been, nor ever will be, gratified.
I gave you my opinion of the future
conduct of the French, with respect
to war; and, if you think I conjecture
right, it must certainly make you
very happy. You may then sing,
with your late friend Dr. Price,
“Mine eyes have seen thy salvation;”
and as there is, you tell us, such cordia-
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lity between the Republicans on both sides of the Atlantic, our American relations will have an abundant satisfaction, on hearing of the murders and oppressions of the children of the same fathers, to join unanimously in the chorus ; and may add, with an ungrateful exultation, there is none that taketh her by the hand, of all the children that she hath brought forth. Such, I say, will be the probable consequences of the present constitution of France being established and secured. But whether *this* will, indeed, be the case, may reasonably admit of some doubt ; because it is not the interest of any Monarch in Europe, that it ever should be. For, though France should not be desirous of making conquests, and should, in this respect, differ from other Republics, yet the example which she has proposed, so humiliating and destructive

tive to Monarchy, cannot fail, unless they are altogether blind to their own interests, to compel them to interfere in her concerns ; lest the fire which is already kindled should spread itself, like a torrent, till it overwhelm and destroy them all. This I mention, not from any wish that I may be right in my conjecture ; for I solemnly declare, that I most earnestly and fervently desire and pray for the freedom and happiness of all mankind. But it seems to be unlikely, that Princes, who are always ready to engage in war, for matters of much smaller importance, should overlook and disregard the most extraordinary Revolution that has ever been heard of ; and in which is interested not the grandeur only and prosperity of particular Sovereigns, but the very name and existence of Monarchy itself.

I am, Sir, &c.

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LETTER XV.

SIR,

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EING deterred, partly by indolence, and still more by disgust, from analyzing your work accurately and minutely, I cannot, however, take my final leave of you, without some remarks on your silence, as well as on your petulance, and censuring you for having omitted, as well as asserted, many things which you ought not. In the parallel which you have drawn between the French and British constitutions (which, after denying that we have any constitution, is

something like a Solecism), you should, at least, have given us our due, and acknowledged your obligation to us through the medium of the Americans. For, as the United States derived their constitution from us, so did the French from them. The several Provinces of North America, though, in some of their political features differing from each other, yet resembled, in the great outlines, their common mother who bore them, nursed them, protected them, and encouraged their growth to her own destruction. A number of persons elected at stated intervals, and a fœderal union, by which the several provinces are knit into one body (of which, in the war in 1758, undertaken solely on their account, we, out of our great wisdom, furnished them with the idea), have been su-

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perinduced to the old constitution ; the ancient forms, as I am told, in other respects, still remaining. The French have borrowed of you their Assembly, which is at least better than that of the States General ; suffering the Idol still to stand on his pedestal, to be worshipped, or insulted, as they shall find themselves disposed. So that, whether their constitution be good or bad ; you ought, at least, to thank us for it. Perhaps, in saying *you* ought to thank us for it, I may express myself improperly ; as your name and language are English, though your sentiments and affections are French. You may, perhaps (for a retired man, like me, has few opportunities of hearing such particulars), be a native American ; as I sincerely hope you are ; nothing less being necessary to vindicate, in the smallest degree,

degree, either your former, or last publication. You will, perhaps, think I should have animadverted on several abstract propositions, to be met with in the course of your work. But, besides my aversion to investigations of this nature, my friends tell me it is unnecessary ; the task having been performed by one much wiser, and more learned than myself. I will conclude my last letter to you, with a sincere wish, that our American brethren may long enjoy their liberty in plenty and tranquillity ; that our new-enfranchised neighbours may be as peaceable as they profess, and as happy as they hope to be ; and that you, Thomas Payne, reflecting seriously on the wicked tendency of your late publication, may hereafter make a better use of the uncommon talents which God hath bestowed

stowed on you, and which, if properly directed, would amply atone for, and even dignify, the obscurity of your birth, and defectiveness of your education.

I am, Sir, &c.

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